

THE VISITANT.

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CONCERT COLLECTION.

At the Concert for April, in this place, a collection was taken up for the purpose of employing Sunday School Missionaries, under the direction of the American Sunday School Union. This measure, it will be recollected, was some time since, recommended by the American Union, to its auxiliaries. The subject, we think, needs only to be mentioned, that its importance may be felt. The effect of faithful missionaries, devoting themselves to a single object, has ever been, to magnify that object in the eye of the world, and give it a more commanding character. The Sunday School is, in many places, even at the present day, looked upon as a degraded institution. People are indifferent to its merits: they need enlightening upon the subject, before they will be awakened to an interest in it.—Hence, the need of missionaries.

We would recommend, further, that at these meetings, (S. S. Concerts,) the children of the schools, be specially invited to attend, together with all the friends of the institution.

THE inquiry of "A Young Teacher," in our last, is well worthy of attention. We could not but admire his humble earnestness in doing good, and were struck with the thought, which he seemed to intimate, that he had perhaps better die, than to be an encumbrance in the Lord's vineyard. Indeed, for what should we wish to live, but to honor God—to be useful to our fellow men? Who would consent to be called a blank in the world, while thousands ready to perish, are calling for his aid.

The following communication, in answer to the "Young Teacher," is from a valued correspondent.

To the Editor of the Visitant:

"A YOUNG TEACHER," asks "How is it possible, to obtain the attention of small children, to religious instruction, so as to make them take an interest in it?"

The object is vastly important: its attainment, very difficult: yet experience concurs with reasoning, to prove that it is attainable.

True religion is the proper purpose of every rational being. Man exists, to seek, to attain, and to enjoy it. Without it, his being is a waste, the precursor of eternal misery. It must therefore be within his reach, and what exists before our own eyes, attests that it is so.

The great obstacles seem to be, the restless and wandering activity of youth, and the natural indisposition of the human mind, to dutiful and affectionate confiding. Children are too busy with a thousand perpetually varying objects, to be easily confined to one, however important: and their confidence is too bold, and too selfish, to admit of their easily reposing in the will, or wisdom of another.

These must be overcome, before our object can be attained. Christian love, is the principle which overcomes them. But what is Christian love? The 13th Chapter of 1st Corinthians, explains it. But we seem to need some further exhibition of it, in its direct bearing upon this particular subject. Take the following remarks.

Children love truth—not, alas, to practise it themselves, but to experience it in others. To serve them, therefore, importantly, for their best interests, the teacher must be strictly a person of truth, not only in those more public and general particulars, which are inseparable from the char-

acter of an honest man; but equally, in the whole detail of those minuter, and less considered circumstances, which contribute, perhaps beyond all others, to the formation of character; but which are so injuriously overlooked, by many of the best and kindest members of society. A child should find reason to rely, without hesitation or distrust, in every thing that his teacher says; and one of the best means of obtaining this reliance, is, the ingenuous and humble acknowledgment, by the teacher himself, of his own ignorance and error. A child must be satisfied, that his teacher has knowledge sufficient to instruct him, in the department which he undertakes.

A child must be satisfied, that his teacher loves him, and is willing to make sacrifices for his happiness. This I believe, is the great essential.

A child must be encouraged and edified, by his teacher's temper. Ill temper is a perfect barrier to religious usefulness and improvement.

A lively and cheerful manner,—a ready and observant mind,—the immediate and judicious notice of good and ill conduct, impartially blended with discrimination, and an affectionate forwardness to control and to serve—are important means to attain our object.

Indefatigable perseverance must be added. The energy of a moment, or of a year, however beautiful, is like the impulse of a fever, powerful perhaps, but exhausting. Persevering exertion, is like the vigorous action of a healthful frame, gathering strength through its own movement. Whoever would excel, must not only pursue right ends, from right motives, and by right means—but, he must PERSEVERE. "Be faithful unto death," is the command,—and, the glorious promise, "I will give thee a crown of life."

Such, Teachers of Sunday Schools—such, all ye, whoever ye be, who love the Lord—to you, are the commands, and the promises. Be strong then in the Lord, and in the power of his might. This world is your battle ground. You will need all your

arms, as long as you live. Your resting place, is in a purer air, and under a more cloudless sky, than the sun of this world witnesses. Your inheritance is incorruptible and undefiled—your house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

C. S.

HAMPTON, March 22, 1825.

To the Editor of the *Visitant*.

DEAR SIR: I send you a report of our Sunday School for the quarter ending 20th March, that you may make such extracts as you think proper, for the *VISITANT*.

When we turn our eyes upon the past, and contemplate the increasing interest which has appeared among us, for the last six months, in favor of the Sunday School, our hearts involuntarily rise in gratitude, to Him who is the Giver of all our mercies. From a low and languishing state, the school has, by his blessing, risen to an importance, commanding the attention and regard of all who take an interest in the welfare of the young.

The number of names entered upon our lists the past quarter, has been 160; of these, 58 are males, and 102 females. The average of attendants, has been 127; exceeding, by 32, that of the preceding quarter.* Number of teachers, 27. 4,654 verses of scripture have been recited; 4,313 *Parme's* Questions answered, and 3,657 of *M'Dowell's*. Our lessons have been short, and we are now prepared to testify, from experience, to the utility of having them so. Our scholars are making the study of the scriptures, more the business of the understanding, that they may be brought near the heart and conscience; and our teachers, finding themselves called upon to explain the sacred volume, give more diligence to the study of divine things.

In organizing a Society, and raising a Library the past winter, we have been prospered beyond our most sanguine expectations. A large and

* This, it will be recollected, was in the winter season.—Ed.

respectable Society has been formed for the support of the school, and a library procured, consisting, at present, of 115 volumes.

Yours, respectfully,

Lewis H. Loss.

OBSERVATIONS—BY A STRANGER,

On the Sabbath School Examination at Hampton, Sunday, 20th March, 1825.

A SERMON, strikingly setting forth the divine authority, and the vital importance of the Bible, appositely prepared for the examination. At the conclusion of the service, the church was cleared, to make way for the arrangement of the classes, in the central seats. The children and scholars, with their teachers, were soon in their places, and within about twenty minutes, the examination began.

At this time, the retrospection of the past, compared with the prospect of the present, was beautiful. A few months ago, and no human influence could have obtained such an assemblage. The children, with several delightful exceptions, had been accustomed to comparative indolence on the holy day. God and his holy word, were more forgotten, and the Sabbath seemed to be considered less a delight, the holy of the Lord and honorable.

But now, elderly persons, and others in the prime of life, with young men and maids, and little children, sat in their modesty, prepared to answer on the word of God. It was affecting to observe this solemn assemblage; and the emotion of heavenly pleasure which it was calculated to excite, was only interrupted by the incongruous levity, which occasionally deformed a few of the countenances; and by the deeply affecting thought, that the mass of this beautiful spectacle, might still, perhaps, have no godliness in it. The stranger, however, was not called to judge the hearts. He saw the exterior, and it was lovely; and well might his heart rejoice, that even so much had been rescued from the

waste, at once dark and dazzling, of Satan's horrible empire.

A blessing was asked by Rev. Mr. Eells. The first class, consisting of grown up persons, was called upon by the superintendent, Mr. Loss, a student of Hamilton College. They rose and stood prepared to answer. The questions were selected from Parmelee's and M'Dowell's systems. The replies seemed readily given, and elicited many of those all important truths, without which, man is still without hope and without God in the world, a poor child of wrath, going down to eternal perdition. It was beautiful to observe the teachers, standing up with their classes in the attitude of scholars, and replying, in their turns, amidst the children. If it was not Christian humility and heavenly love, it looked so like them, that a stranger's mistake were excusable. It bore strikingly the character of "preferring one another in honor;" of "serving one another in love." It seemed to shew that holy spirit, which fears the Lord, and has no other fear.

The examination closed. A hymn was sung—thanks were given. The glory was with Him, who had deigned to inspire the hearts of his feeble and sinful creatures, with such an energy of Christian love as to produce fruits so beauteous.

Friends of Sabbath Schools—dear children, who have this precious privilege, go on—your cause is glorious, and holy, and heavenly. Be humble and fear: for you are sinners! rejoice and be strong, for the Lord of hosts is your strength. Set your chief affections upon heavenly things. None other are worthy of you, or can supply the wants of your souls. Be watchful and pray; study to improve; be careful to give no just cause of censure; yet seek not the praise of man, for your proper portion is the cross:—take it up daily; bear it cheerfully; be faithful unto death—no shorter fidelity will do; and sweet will be the crown of imperishable glory, in that day when your Saviour shall make up his jewels.

C. S.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Kingston, Upper Canada, to his friend in this place.

"I ENCLOSE you a quarterly report of the school in which I am engaged. There are three other Sunday Schools in this town; and they are generally, I believe, in a flourishing condition. We have a Mr. F—— preaching with us, and his labors are blessed. Ten or twelve give good evidence of a change of heart. Some are anxious, and many inquiring. Three or four of the former are Sunday School Teachers. We feel that the Lord has already done wonders, in bringing into his kingdom a few from this valley of spiritual death,—and some, the least expected. It should increase our faith. We have much opposition to contend with, and we need the prayers of all the faithful."

By the report, which accompanied this letter, we should infer, that although the male department has the greatest numbers, the female is by far the most flourishing. Of 24,000 verses recited, 19,000 were by the girls. We know not how to account for this, but upon the well known fact, that Sunday Schools in every part of the world, have been principally indebted, for their very existence, to the exertions of benevolent females."

The superintendents observe, that "there have been very few rewards of a temporal nature held out to the children to excite emulation. The principal one before the School at present, is a Bible, to be presented to each scholar, belonging to a Testament or Bible class, who shall continue in School, without being once absent, giving good behavior during the present year."

"The books of the Library have been considerably read by the teachers and scholars. We continue to receive the *"Sabbath School Visitant,"* a monthly publication from Utica, a work highly useful to Sabbath Schools."

It is an easy thing, says Cecil, to talk to children; but to talk to them profitably, is the last effort of ability.

Selections.

INFLUENCE OF AN INDIVIDUAL.

A young minister of the gospel once said to an intimate friend, "My brother, you and I are little men, but before we die, our influence must be felt on the other side of the world." Not many years after, a ship, returning from a distant quarter of the globe, paused on her passage across the deep. There stood on her deck a man of God, who wept over the dead body of his friend. He prayed, and the sailors wept with him. And they consigned that body to the ocean. It was the body of the man, who, in the ardour of youthful benevolence, had aspired to extend his influence through the world. He died in youth; but he had redeemed his pledge: and at this hour, his influence is felt in Asia, in Africa, in the islands of the sea, and in every corner of his native country. This man was SAMUEL JOHN MILLS: and all who knew his history, will say that I have exaggerated neither the grandeur of his aspirations, nor the result of his efforts. He traversed our land, like a ministering spirit, silently, and yet effectually, from the hill country of the Pilgrims, to the valley of the Missouri. He wandered on his errands of benevolence from village to village, and from city to city, pleading now with the patriot, for a country growing up to an immensity of power, and now with the Christian, for a world lying in wickedness. He explored in person the desolations of the west, and in person he stirred up to enterprise and effort the churches of the east. He lived for India and for Owyhee, and died in the service of Africa. He went to heaven in his youth; but his works do follow him, like a long train of glory that still widens and brightens, and will widen and brighten forever. Who can measure the influence of one such minister of the gospel?—*Mr. Bacon's Sermon.*

Best precept of the Koran.—Shew mercy; do good to all; and dispute not with the ignorant.

REMARKABLE CONVERSION.

A young gentleman of high connexions, and great respectability, was induced by gay acquaintance to accompany them to a ball. Arrived at the scene of dissipation, the festive company proceeded to their amusement. The music struck up, and he among the rest, was highly delighted with the diversion. In the midst of their enjoyment, as though a messenger had been sent immediately from heaven, *the clock struck one.* That striking passage of Doctor Young's instantly rushed upon his mind.

"The bell strikes one. We take no note of time
But from its lots. To give it then a tongue
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,
It is the knell of my departed hours:
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood.
It is the signal that demands despatch:
How much is to be done! My hopes and fears
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? a fathomless abyss;
A dread eternity!"

Conviction seized the youth, and alarmed and terrified, he instantly left the dissipated throng, and retired to his closet. The result was, a saving change, and he is now a Christian indeed, in whom is no guile.

[*English Paper.*]

Such remarkable instances show the sovereignty of God in dispensing his favours: but they are no more intended as encouragements for indulgence in vain amusements, than the conversion of St. Paul was for the practice of persecution.—*Ed. Vis.*

DEATH OF A SUNDAY SCHOLAR ON
THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

THE encouraging circumstances of the following anecdote, selected from the London Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, are so worthy of notice, that we press it upon the attention of Sunday school teachers, beseeching them to faint not, nor be weary in well doing.

A boy belonging to a Sunday school in a country village was so refractory, so vicious, and so lost to every thing that was decorous and good, that it was necessary he should be expelled the school. As he grew in years, the evil propensities of his mind man-

ifested themselves in multiplied acts of dissipation. At length he enlisted for a soldier, and went abroad to serve in a foreign country, leaving behind him a pious and affectionate mother, to mourn over the follies and vices of her depraved son. After a considerable lapse of time, a pious man residing at the same place, was about to go out as a sergeant, to join the regiment to which this youth belonged. He, knowing both the mother and the son, and supposing the old woman might wish to communicate, through him, some message to her son, waited upon her preparatory to setting out on his journey. He found her the subject of heavy affliction, and confined to her bed. He introduced to her notice the object of his visit, and the old woman had only one boon to bestow—had only one request to make to her rebellious son. The boon was a bible. The request, that for the sake of his poor dying mother, he would read at least one verse each day. The sergeant departed. He arrived in the foreign land to which he was destined, and there he found the former Sunday scholar as wicked a man as he had been a boy. He lost no time in making known to him his mother's request. The sergeant said to him, "I am the bearer of the last gift, and the last wish of your poor mother." "What!" said he, "is she dead then?" "She was not," replied the sergeant, "when I left England, but I think there cannot be any doubt that she is dead before this. Here," said he, "is a Bible (giving it to him) which your mother has sent you; and she has only one request to make of you, and that is, that for her sake you will read one verse a day, at least." "O," said he, "if it is only one verse, here goes." He opened the Bible—he looked—he paused:—"Well," said he, "this is strange, that the first verse that caught my eye, should be the *only one* I ever learned to read in the Sunday school. 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" He began to inquire who "me" was; and the pious sergeant, like Philip of old,

spoke to him of Jesus. From this period a manifest change was observable in his conduct. It was not very long after this circumstance, that the regiment to which he belonged was engaged in battle.—When the conflict was over, the sergeant before mentioned walked over the field of blood, and discovered his late pupil lying under a tree, a corpse. The Bible was open at the passage before quoted, on which he had reposed his dying head, and its sacred pages were soaked through with his blood." Its cheering invitation had doubtless been the exercise of his dying faith, and the meditation of that divine record had consoled and sanctified him, being to him "a rod and a staff" through the valley of the shadow of death; and in this manner it may have pleased God to counsel him by his wisdom, and after that receive him into glory.

"Thus terminated the life of one Sunday scholar, over whom, perhaps, a teacher had many times sighed—'Ah! I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought.'"

PARENT AND CHILD.

DEAR SIR:

I send you the following anecdote, stating how a guilty parent was reclaimed from the sin of profane swearing; and by the same instrument brought to engage in the duty of family prayer. About twenty-eight years since, when I was a wicked, careless sinner, my eldest son, then about four years old, had been living in a family in the country, where there was a pious young woman, who had taken much pains, both by her precept and example, to impress my son's mind with the importance of religion, and especially of secret prayer. The family with whom he lived, was in the habit of bringing him home to see his mother on Saturday, and calling for him on the Sabbath day following. On one of those visits he asked his mother in my presence, "where bad people would go to, who said bad words?" But before his mother had time to give an

answer, he asked if they would not go to hell? His mother's answer was, that they would, unless they repented. He answered with a deep sigh, which I never shall forget, that his papa would go to hell then, for he said bad words, repeating those profane expressions which I was in the habit of using. Language would fail, in expressing my shame, confusion and remorse at the time. I endeavoured to conceal my feelings, by affecting to continue reading a book, I had been perusing; but I had become almost blind with remorse, for I could not distinguish one line or letter from another.

My reflections were about the following:—Surely it is now high time that I break off from such profane and sinful oaths, when my own child has become my reprover. I from that hour resolved that I would cease from that sin at least, and never set the example to my children; which promise I have been enabled to keep from that day until this.

It pleased God, shortly after this rebuke, to give me such views of my exposed and ruined situation as a guilty sinner, that I was led to cast myself on the arm of divine mercy, through a dear Redeemer's blood and righteousness. I made a public profession of my repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus, by connecting myself with his church and people. Yet so great was my natural diffidence, and want of resolution, although deeply impressed with the duty, that I did not engage in the performance of family prayer. Now again, the Lord sends my son to reprove me in this thing. My son asked his mother in my presence, if all good people did not pray? To which his mother answered, yes. He then asked his mother if his papa was a good man? To which his mother replied, yes, my dear, I hope he is. Well then, said he, "if papa is a good man, why don't he pray? Miss — prays every night and morning."

This had the effect, I trust, which God in his adorable providence intended. I became greatly embarrassed, and at the same time God's

Holy Spirit so impressed my mind with the importance of the duty of family prayer, that before closing my eyes to sleep, I determined I would commence the discharge of that duty, and have ever since, through much weakness and infirmity, endeavoured to continue the same, much to my own comfort, and not in vain to the great blessing of my family.—[*West. Lum.*] L. M.

EFFECTS PRODUCED BY READING
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"My word shall not return unto me void."

A poor student of the University of Leipsic, having occasion to undertake a journey to his distant friends, was in want of the necessary money for that purpose. He therefore was induced to go to a learned Jew, to pawn his Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament. The latter contained the Greek and German text in opposite columns. The learned Jew, little as he valued this book, was however prevailed upon to give the student half a rix dollar for it. During the absence of the student, he undertook to read it through, with a view to confirm his mind in enmity against Jesus, to ridicule his person in the synagogue, and to be the better prepared to testify his zeal for the Jewish faith. His wife and children were not permitted to see the book; he was determined to read it alone as a sworn enemy of Jesus, and to discover the falsehood of the Christian religion in all its parts. As the student was absent for about seven weeks, the Jew had sufficient leisure to perform his task. But as he proceeded to read, his surprise increased, and a sacred awe pervaded him. In reading some impressive passages he could scarcely refrain from exclaiming, Ah, that Jesus were my Saviour!—Having completed the reading, he was astonished at himself, and exceedingly perplexed that, in spite of his earnest desire to find fuel in the New Testament for the increase of his burning enmity against Jesus, he had discovered no-

thing deserving of hatred; but on the contrary much that was great, sublime, heavenly and divine. At length he charged himself with silly simplicity and blind folly, and resolved to open the book no more. In this resolution he persisted some days. But the consolatory and heavenly instructions he had read, and which had left an indelible impression upon his mind, and the glorious prospect of life eternal which had opened before him, did not suffer him to rest either day or night, and he resolved to read the New Testament a second time, fully determined to be more careful in ascertaining that Jesus and his apostles had justly deserved the hatred of all Jews, in all ages. Again, however, he was unable to discover any thing that was absurd, or which bore the stamp of falsehood, but much wisdom, inexpressible comfort for an afflicted mind, and a hope of immortality which seemed to rescue him from that dreadful anxiety with which the thoughts of futurity had often filled him. Still he could not divest himself of his prejudices, but read the New Testament the third time with the following resolution: "If I discover nothing the third time why Jesus and his apostles, and their doctrine, should be hated by the Jews, I will become a Christian; but if my wish in first opening the book is now gratified, I will forever detest the Christian religion." During the third reading of the history of Jesus, his doctrines and promises, he could not refrain from tears, his soul was affected in a manner which no pen can describe. Now he was quite overcome, the love of the most holy and lovely of the children of men filled his very soul. Being fully determined to become a Christian, he went without delay and made his desire known to a Christian minister. The student returned from his journey, and brought the borrowed money with interest to redeem his two books. The Jew asked him if he would sell the New Testament. The student was unwilling to part with it, but after some persuasion yielded. What do you demand for it? asked

the Jew. A rix dollar will satisfy me, was the reply. The Jew opened a chest, and laid down one hundred *louis d'or*. Take that, said he; gladly will I pay more if you desire it. And if at any time I can be of use to you, only apply to me, and I will be your friend to the utmost of my power. The student was surprised, and supposed the Jew made sport of him. But the latter related to him what change of mind had been wrought in him by reading the New Testament; upbraided him with setting so little value on that precious book, and said, "never will I part with this book, and you will oblige me by accepting the money." From that time he became a sincere Christian.—*Israel's Advocate*.

THE INDIAN'S PRAYER.

The following interesting anecdote is from the journal of a missionary at Green Bay, Michigan Territory.

"One day, as I was telling the children the importance of being prepared for death, which was the certain fate of all, while life was very uncertain, a lad asked in a low tone when he should die?—I answered, it was unknown to me, but was perfectly known to God, who is the sustainer of our lives and the father of our spirits. I then endeavoured to press upon them the importance of prayer. The Lord's prayer was then repeated to them, and they were told it was the best of prayers, as it was first used and recommended by the Saviour of the world—and that it specified all for which it was necessary for us to pray, both for soul and body. They were told that all good people and children prayed to God both morning and evening."

The boy related to his grand-father all he had heard, and continued from day to day his entreaties to have him pray; and observed to him, "you cannot be good unless you pray." At length the old chief called, and informed me of his desire to hear what we must say when we supplicate the Great Spirit. The Lord's Prayer was repeated to him, and he

continued for several days, often calling with a view to hear that prayer repeated to him.

The boy at length came to me, with his countenance expressing the greatest joy, saying, "my grand-father is good now." Why? said I. He answered, "because he prays?" And what does he say when he prays? "O Father, thou dwellest in the highest Heavens." Here he paused—What else does he say?—"Let thy name be great in all the earth." What else? "Let thy chieftianship be all over the world—let thy will be on earth, the same as in heaven." I asked the boy what made him so rejoiced? "Because," said he, "my grand-father will now be a good man, and when he dies he will not go to a dark place, but to that country where the light is very bright, very bright indeed!"

I was quite agreeably surprised at the language of the child, and almost ready to conclude that his tender heart had been illuminated by him who has declared that he is "the light of the world."

Poetry.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

ONCE on the raging seas I rode,
The storm was loud,—the night
was dark,
The ocean yawn'd—and rudely blow'd
The wind that toss'd my foundering
bark.

Deep horror then my vitals froze,
Death-struck, I ceas'd the tide to
stem;
When suddenly a star arose,—
It was the Star of Bethlehem.

I was my guide, my light, my all,
It bade my dark forebodings cease;
And through the storm and dangers'
thrall,
It led me to the port of peace.

Now safely moor'd—my perils o'er,
I'll sing, first in night's diadem,
For ever and for evermore,
The Star, the Star of Bethlehem!